

THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY-LE-BOW.

THE attention of the public and of the profession has been of late directed to this building: I am, therefore, induced to correct the statement of "J. S. I." (page 522, ante), if you think this communication of sufficient importance with that object in view.

First, then, the Corporation of London has no more to do with Bow Church than with St. Mary's, Newington, St. George's, Southwark, or any other church throughout the land. The regular guardians of the church, as to repairs, &c. are the united parishes of St. Mary-le-Bow, St. Pancras, Soper-lane, and Allhallows, Honey-lane, and to these parties, or their respective churchwardens, should the attention required by "J. S. I." have been directed. So much for a slap at the City.

In the next place, the iron spindle of the vane is not fixed (and never was) on "two cross iron bars," and it is not discontinued at "about half way down the obelisk," but is, in fact, carried down as low as the commencement of the said obelisk, that is to say, 21 feet below the upper termination of the masonry. At 2 feet above the lower end of this spindle the ironwork diverges into the form of four inverted brackets, resting upon as many stone corbels, the spindle or stem being as much as 4 inches diameter at the bottom, diminishing regularly to 2 inches diameter above. Now from any or all of these inverted brackets one or two of Newall's copper-wire cords might be attached and carried down even into the well in the church-yard below, at no very great outlay of expense, and no doubt some such provision against accidents by lightning would be a very judicious and prudent measure. One of the pinnacles on the tower of St. Saviour's Church was shattered by lightning a year or two ago, and of course Bow spire may one of these days fall under the like mischance.

As to the split column secured by a gun-metal screw clasp, it has stood securely and without any increase of the fracture for upwards of thirty years: how long it was split before the clasp was applied is unknown: from a careful examination of the whole tower and spire I am unable to perceive or detect the slightest deviation from the perpendicular; and as to cramps in the tower, never having seen them I am unable to determine of what metal they may be composed.—I should suppose of iron, but in the rebuilding (anno 1520) of 42 feet of the upper part of the spire, not an ounce of iron was used, but wherever cramps were required gun-metal was adopted, floated in with Atkinson's cement, and not run with melted lead.

And now a word or two as to the height of this renowned spire: several have from time to time been given. One gentleman, noted for his many topographical publications, has made it 235 feet, and the minimum, or lowest elevation I have seen (to which the Royal Academy lately awarded one of their prizes), is 217 feet or thereabout, being a variation of only 4 feet 6 inches below Mr. Christopher's measurement, whose drawing gained him the highest prize.

Many years ago opportunities of admeasurement were afforded infinitely more favourable than could be obtained by the recent competitors for the silver medal: these opportunities were taken advantage of, and the height eventually ascertained to be 221 feet 6 inches from the paving in the centre of the north front to the highest part of the Dragon's wing. This elevation is four inches higher than the original as left by Sir Christopher Wren, and may serve as an answer to rumours still floating about, that it was curtailed even to the extent of 5 feet, as well as to an eminent architect of the present day, who gave it as his opinion that "it was a beautiful spire before they lowered it."

Mr. Christopher's height varies only a very few inches from the 221 feet 6 inches above mentioned.

In the late so-called restoration of the church, the alteration of the columns adjoining the altar, from Lapis Lazuli to Verde antique, may or may not be considered an improvement, but

the removal of the elaborately-carved sounding-board can scarcely be called a restoration. (See "Vestual Monuments," vol. 5, pl. 62.) Southwark. G. G.

THE LATE W. TIERNEY CLARK, ENGINEER.

MR. WILLIAM TIERNEY CLARK, who died at Hammersmith on the 22nd ultimo, had for more than forty years been the resident engineer of the Middlesex Water Works Company. During this period Mr. Clark executed various public works, which gained for him considerable reputation, particularly the Hammersmith Suspension Bridge. The *Church and State Gazette* gives the following additional particulars of his life. The Shoreham Suspension Bridge, a structure of classical simplicity, was executed by Mr. Clark for his Grace the Duke of Norfolk; and the bridge at Marlow was also his work. The not less beautiful bridge over the Avon at Bath; that at Rochester over the Thames and Medway Canal; and the Gravesend Pier, were other creations of Mr. Clark's.

But his master-piece, and that which has given him a more than European reputation, is the great suspension bridge which, so to speak, he flung over the Danube, between Pesth and Buda. This great work was executed at the command of the Emperor of Austria. German engineers had considered the difficulties insuperable; but the energy and experience of Mr. Clark enabled him to overcome them, and when the work was gallantly accomplished the imperial gratitude was warmly expressed by acts as well as words. Previous to the opening of this bridge to the public, the engineer resolved to test it to the utmost; and while consideration was being entertained as to the best means—these, and of the most satisfactory, offered themselves where they were least expected. The Austrian and Hungarian armies, or such large portions of them as to deserve the name of armies, passed and repassed over the bridge in alternate flight and pursuit. The tramp of large bodies of men, the tread of squadrons of horse, the galloping of the light and the more tardy progress of the heavy artillery, gave such a trial to the new work as might well have contented the most scrupulous of engineers. It fully proved the trustworthiness of the structure.

More recently, Mr. Clark completed the bridge at Welbeck for his Grace the Duke of Portland; and, even while the shadow of death was descending upon him, he was engaged on plans for the construction of works to supply the city of Amsterdam with water from the neighbourhood of the sand-hills of Haarlem. Through life Mr. Clark had been what may be strictly termed "a courageous worker," and even the terrible paroxysms of a most painful malady could not incapacitate him for labour which he resumed with calm cheerfulness during their intervals.

Miscellaneous.

THE SKELETON BUILDING SYSTEM IN GLASGOW.—RESPONSIBILITY OF BUILDERS.—At the Glasgow Circuit of Justiciary on Friday week, an important case, as determining the liability of builders for the materials employed by them in the construction of tenements, was tried before Lord Cockburn. Mr. John Wilson, mason and builder, was charged with culpable homicide, as also culpable violation or neglect of duty, inasmuch as having contracted to execute the mason-work of a tenement in West Bath-street, and having carried on the said work, he culpably and recklessly, and in violation of his duty, executed, or caused to be executed, the same in direct contravention of his agreement, by which the back wall and the middle gable fell or gave way, and in consequence that three individuals were injured, and shortly after died, being thus culpably killed by the prisoner, through the negligence of not attending properly to his business. The prisoner pleaded not guilty. A number of witnesses were examined on the part of the Crown, whose testimony went generally

to prove that the fall of the building was not attributable to the subsidence of the foundation, but to the insufficiency of the materials used in building the walls, and the manner in which the mortar had been made. The jury declared the prisoner guilty of culpable neglect of duty, by a majority of ten to five, but unanimously recommended him to the leniency of the court. Lord Cockburn concurred with the verdict. If it had not been for the recommendation of the jury, he should have passed a sentence of eighteen months' imprisonment; but he would now modify the punishment to one year's imprisonment. The *Glasgow Gazette*, in commenting on this case, recurs to its former warnings on this subject, quoted by us at the time, and says,—“The evidence for the prosecution is bad enough; but there is something still more alarming to the public in what is so curiously termed the ‘exculatory proof.’ The burden of this exculatory evidence, if there be any reliance in it whatever, goes simply to prove that Mr. Wilson, mason and builder, was no worse than his neighbours. ‘The material,’ says Andrew Patrick, mason, ‘was the same as I have seen used at other buildings.’ Robert Patrick has much the same opinion. ‘The materials were as good as those used at other buildings. He did not think they were inferior. The sand used for the lime was rather soft. The lime was good of itself.’ Again, John McKay, a mason for twelve years, says—‘The materials generally were the heaviest that I have built.’ What may be exactly meant by that, we cannot tell; but this, and other similar evidence, termed, by courtesy, ‘exculatory,’ sounds like a bad report for the durability of Glasgow. We hope that the present case will operate as a salutary warning.”

BUILDERS' CLERKS.—Your correspondent, a "Builder's Clerk," has spoken in your last week's impression, of a subject which interests a large number of London clerks, namely, the hours of business in builders' offices. I am afraid that our employers do not study their own interests in detaining young men so late at their offices, as it completely puts a stop to any advantage which the employers would derive from a course of study in connection with the business. If some of our leading firms in London were to adopt the plan and close their offices (except on particular occasions) at six o'clock, I am sure it would contribute largely and beneficially to the comfort and interest of the employer and employed. —ANOTHER BUILDER'S CLERK.

THE ELECTRIC LIGHT.—An "Electric Light Company," for the supply of the electric light for public and domestic use, is in course of formation, with a capital of 200,000*l.* and power to increase it beyond that sum. The *Liverpool Courier* states that every practical difficulty connected with the perfect continuity of the light, and the steady successive illuminating power, on Mr. Stait's system, has been overcome; that the products of his different modes of producing continuous electric power will go far to pay all expenses of obtaining the light, if not entirely so; and that several leading gentlemen of Liverpool have for some time been negotiating with a view to the formation of a company to work the patents for Liverpool and elsewhere. The localities named for its use on the river are the Landing-stage and Woodside Ferry, Egerton Docks and Rock Ferry, and Egremont Pier, while the centre of the town can be brilliantly illuminated from the Town Hall. The permanent apparatus is said to be in a forward state, so as to be ready as soon as the necessary erection by the Dock Company can be completed at the back of the Landing-stage. It is stated in the *Illustrated News*, that certain artists have obtained photographic portraits by means of the electric light. Scotland on this point, according to the *Scotman*, is already abreast of her southern neighbours; one of the Edinburgh photographic artists having established a battery, with which he obtains a light said to produce satisfactory portraits.

ORDNANCE SURVEY.—The survey on the six-inch scale is rapidly advancing in various parts of the county of Fife, in Scotland.